

DANIEL R. TILDEN'S
LETTER TO MR. GIDDINGS,
GIVING HIS REASONS FOR SUPPORTING
GENERAL SCOTT.

HON. JOSHUA R. GIDDINGS:

You and others have had occasion to bring my name to the notice of the public, in your correspondence with the "*True Democrat*;" although noticed by you with a liberality and kindness due to our former friendship, others have referred to me and to my course, with some bitterness of spirit, and have spoken in no very complimentary terms of my motives. But I do not make this a ground of complaint. I was aware that, in combining with the whig party, for the support of Gen. Scott for the Presidency, that my motives would be subject to misconstruction. These correspondents doubtless, in their criticisms on my conduct, have expressed what they believed to be due to truth, and to the cause they advocate.

But I feel unwilling to be disparaged in the public estimation, without stating the reasons for the course I have resolved to pursue, and have taken the liberty to do so, in the form of a communication to you, knowing that you have the capacity to judge rightly of these reasons, and the candor to give them the credit to which they are entitled.

In reply to these imputations upon my integrity, I shall simply say, in my own behalf, that for the last twenty years I have been identified with the anti-slavery cause, and during that time, if there be any act of mine, which has evinced a want of zeal and earnestness of purpose in support of it, my friends are at liberty to point it out.

The darkest hours, and those in which anti-slavery men were most exposed to the power of temptation, have long since passed away. This was when the early supporters of the cause, had to encounter the opposition of those who now so zealously, and, I doubt not, from noble and patriotic motives, support it.

Yet the mistaken position assumed by ~~me~~ ^{them} that this most gloomy

period of our anti-slavery history, admonishes me that their conclusions on this subject, are not to be relied upon as infallible, and I cannot yield myself, contrary to the convictions of my own judgment, to such a course of action as they may deem it their duty to pursue.

During the period of my connection with the anti-slavery cause, opposition to the unconstitutional demands of slavery has been, with me, a matter of paramount obligation in politics, and my views of the institution of slavery itself, and the dangerous influence which it is exerting upon the destinies of the country, correspond, as you well know, with your own; for, during our long and familiar intercourse, we have often had occasion to compare opinions upon this point. I believe there is no interest which it is the duty of a republican country to cherish, that is not endangered by the existence of the institution of slavery.

Thus far there is no ground for controversy between us. But we differ as to the political means we shall employ, under present circumstances, to secure the object we aim at; and even this difference of opinion, as between you and myself, is of comparatively recent origin. Up to the spring of 1848, with the same views we now entertain of slavery and slave extension, we steadfastly maintained our connexion with the whig party. We insisted, in our private conversation, and in all our public addresses, that anti-slavery men were in duty bound to co-operate with the whig party. We not only contended that for us, as anti-slavery men, to maintain this connexion, was justifiable and proper, but absolutely essential and necessary as the best means for opposing the unconstitutional aggressions of the slave power with which the country was then threatened.

We both condemned the anti-slavery organization of 1844, and urged anti-slavery men to co-operate with the whig party, in order that we might make an effectual resistance to the annexation of Texas, which was the great practical slave issue then before the country. After the defeat of Mr. Clay, by the loss of New York, brought about, as we believed, by this third party organization, we denounced their action, and thought the course which they had deemed it their duty to pursue, had done much to strengthen and perpetuate slavery in this country; and I think so yet.

We struggled together in Congress, against slave propagandism, from 1843 to 1847. We resisted the annexation of Texas, and were defeated on that issue by an overwhelming democratic vote, augmented and strengthened by three southern whigs only. We next took our stand against the war, believing that if further prosecuted it would result in the acquisition of territory, over which slavery would inevitably extend itself. Upon this issue we found ourselves in a meager minority of fourteen. The war was prosecuted and the territory acquired, and then arose the great question whether it should be dedicated to freedom or oppression.

Thus stood matters on the assembling of the Whig National Convention, in June, 1848. This great question was pressing upon the country; the character of the presidential candidates and the result of the coming presidential election, we then believed to be decisive of this question. From the long agitation of the slavery question, in Congress, you nor myself, were, probably, never more deeply excited upon it, than at the meeting of this Convention. Yet, under these circumstances, our confidence in the whig party was still unshaken. We still confided in them on this question of slave extension.

I was a member of the Philadelphia Convention, and an advocate of the claims of Gen. Scott for the Presidency. He was the candidate of that portion of the whig party who were most active in their opposition to slavery extension. I believe none doubted, at that time, that Gen. Scott was safe and reliable on this question, and I know well he was bitterly assailed by the south, on account of his supposed anti-slavery proclivities.

I visited Washington, and was there two or three days prior to the meeting of the Convention, for the purpose of promoting the nomination of Gen. Scott. On account of your superior ability and experience, and the great confidence reposed in you as an anti-slavery man, I was in the habit of consulting you on all matters, where the question of slavery was involved, and I recollect of talking with you on that occasion, but I am not able to say, from my recollection of what was said by you at that time, whether you were for Gen. Scott as the candidate for the Presidency or not. But I think I may safely state that you did not dissuade me from my purpose to support him. Had you done so, it is not likely I should have forgotten it.

Gen. Scott was sustained in this Convention by the class of men who sustained him in the Baltimore Convention in June last—by the Anti-slavery portion of the Whig party, (North) and by some liberal minded men from the South. There was this difference, however, at the last Convention. On the opening of the balloting, Gen. Scott got but one vote from the South. He seemed to be emphatically a Northern candidate. He was born down in the Convention of '48 by the slave holding South, aided and assisted by the commercial and manufacturing interests of the North.

The friends of freedom were arrayed against these same interests in the late Whig Convention, and for the first time in the history of parties in this country, the slave-holding and money side of the scale was made to kick the beam. I confess that when I saw the unyielding course of these men, struggling for five days against these interests, and reflected upon the indignities we received from these same interests in 1848, it begat within me a sentiment of friendship and respect for them, which it will be difficult to overcome. I am very certain that I must be sustained by strong reasons to justify me in deserting these men.

You will say that they triumphed by assenting to the compromise. This is true; and it is a point to which I intend to call your attention by and by.

One word more as to the Convention of 1848. Gen. Taylor was nominated. He was presented as the candidate of the South—his history was a military history, and he had no other. We had no knowledge of him save what was recorded of his acts upon the battle field. We knew him to be intimately connected with the institution of slavery, and with this knowledge we decided, and I think from the evidence then before us, we decided correctly, that Gen. Taylor was not to be trusted on the subject of slavery extension, and that we could not support him.

Here our connexion with the Whig party ended. We organized a new party at Buffalo, embodying, at the outset, one half of the entire democracy of the State of New York. We adopted articles of faith broad enough and liberal enough to catch every Democrat in christendom. After the Presidential election, the Democracy of Massachusetts, Vermont and other New England States, seemed about to enlist under our banner. This was also true of Wisconsin; and distinguished men of the party in Pennsylvania, Illinois, Michigan and other States, appeared to be under marching orders for the Free Soil platform. The Democrats of Northern Ohio were set down as certain for our organization.

From these facts you and myself both supposed (at least this was true of myself,) that the so called Democratic party, was about to become democratic indeed, and our hopes began to centre in them as the party which was to make successful resistance to the further encroachments of slavery. But no sooner was Franklin Pierce nominated, and the ancient war-cry of the party raised, than nineteen twentieths of our Democratic allies deserted us, and go from one extreme to the very verge of the other extreme on this question of slavery. John Van Buren, one of the High Priests of this new order of ours, declaring publicly, that henceforth one of the cardinal features of his creed would be resistance to the agitation of the question of slavery in or out of Congress, and under whatever form or color it might be made.

I say nineteen-twentieths of these men deserted us, and I am not sure as to the whereabouts of the other twentieth. Within the circle of my personal acquaintance some few remain; and one or two men I know, who, since our organization, have sacrificed a high position in the Democratic party, and for the sake of principle, combined with the Free Democracy. And in other more favored sections of the country, there may be Democrats, with us in 1848, who still adhere to your organization. But so far as my knowledge extends, the number of those who remain is small.

This was our first experiment with the Democratic party, and I

submit to you if the experiment has not been most disastrous.

You may say that I have imitated the conduct of these men. Here I wish you to suspend your opinion, for it is upon this very point I wish to be heard.

With these facts now before us, I submit to you the inquiry, which party, relying upon the record, should we trust on this still pending question of slavery extension? You answer neither! But one of them must come into power and exercise an important, and I think a decisive and final influence on this question of slavery. This, neither you or myself have the power to prevent.

Gen. Taylor was elected in spite of our effort, and notwithstanding the defection of Fillmore and Webster, the question of the increase of the political power of the South by slave extension, stands just where it did in the spring of 1848, when you and myself were both active members of the Whig party, and employing it to accomplish our anti-slavery purposes. You may reply that by the settlement of the Mexican boundary question, slavery was extended. I admit that it extended slave territory. I never believed that Texas had any more right to the territory between the Neuces and the Rio Grande, than to the West Indies. This, however, was simply a question of boundary, upon which men differed in opinion, and the question whether slavery should or should not be extended, was not involved in the adjustment of it. No concession of principle was here made to the slave power. No recognition of the right to extend slavery by this government; and no increase of the political power of the South, to secure which all the slave-holding effort of this nation is now enlisted. Texas, with her boundaries enlarged, has still but her two votes in the United States Senate.

Do you believe these favorable results would have been secured had Cass instead of Taylor, been the successful candidate at that election?

We have now so far recovered from the excitement awakened by the stirring events of that campaign, and from the prejudices occasioned by the intemperate assaults of our old associates, as to be able to decide this question impartially. For my own part, I do not hesitate to say, that much as I doubted and distrusted Gen. Taylor, his election over Cass has preserved to us the privilege of again contesting the question of slavery extension over the newly acquired Mexican territory; and the position of the Whig party to day, is in every respect, more favorable on this issue, than in 1848, when you and myself gave to it our cordial support.

Where is the change, let me inquire, which has come over the Whig party that makes a connexion with it now so criminal, when it was so very commendable and praiseworthy in 1848? I grant that it is not an anti-slavery party, nor did we support it as such in '48. It seems we did not adhere to it at that time from any special attachment to Whig principles, for we showed ourselves sufficiently loose footed as to

these, and, indeed ultra democratic, by endorsing the Buffalo resolutions within two months after our separation from the Whigs. I admit, too, that some of the leading men of this party are pro-slavery, and thus they were in 1848.

If political organizations are but the means we employ to secure something beyond them, and there be no demerit in separating from them when other means are at command, which can be better employed for our purpose, then I am at liberty to enquire of you, why it is, that if the Whig party sustain their former relation to this same old issue of slave extension, that we may not, without sacrifice of honor, again combine with them? You may answer, it is because they are so corrupt! I confess this answer is not satisfactory to me. I do not anticipate, myself, a speedy reign of the saints in this country, and you and myself are old enough, and have had experience enough of men generally, and of politicians in particular, to decide at once, that an efficient party—a majority party in this country, however it may be brought into being, must embody a vast amount of corruption; and if you expect a Free Democratic party, made up of a majority of the voting men of this nation, which shall be less corrupt than either of the old organizations, my humble opinion is, that you will be disappointed. That your party now, in proportion to numbers, may embrace more, honest-hearted and self-sacrificing men, than either of the old parties I am not disposed to deny.

It seems to me, then, that there is not one reason that prompted us to maintain our relation with the Whig party in 1848, and urge others to connect themselves with it, that does not exist now in all its force.

There is an answer of yours which I have already anticipated. You insist that the National Whig party and their candidate, have endorsed the compromise, fugitive slave law and all, and are no more entitled to your confidence.

With regard to the character of this law, it is not possible for us to differ. I think, with you, that the law is a disgrace to a civilized people; and more, that the clause of the constitution under which it was framed, is as infamous as the law. After its passage, it was my opinion we could make an issue for its repeal. I afterwards became satisfied that no such thing could be done; and I believed this to have been the opinion of yourself and other Free Soil members of Congress in permitting the law to remain upon the statute book for two years without making one serious effort for its repeal.

I do not believe that the repeal of this law can be made a practical anti-slavery issue; and while I am willing to give to it the importance that it deserves, I will not permit my opposition to this law to so far control my action as to render it a nullity upon issues which are practicable, and which, in my judgment, are of most pressing importance to the country.

What are really your grounds of opposition to the fugitive law? Is it

that men, struggling for the glorious boon of liberty, are sent back into bondage without a trial according to the forms of the common law? Is this your objection? No! Your objection is that they are sent back at all! We have insisted on a jury trial for the slave in the courts of the state from which he should be claimed. The court, we well know, is to take an oath to support the constitution of the United States and the constitution of the state in which it discharges its judicial functions. The court lays down the law to the jury; the jury swear to try the case according to the law as laid down and the evidence. The fact that the victim owes service is established, and he is hand cuffed and fettered and dragged from our free soil, into hopeless bondage. How much higher is the morality of that man, who insists upon, and is satisfied with proceedings like these, than the morality of the man who upholds the fugitive law?

Garret Smith has classed slaveholding with murder. If this be true, those who abet it are murderers; and the controversy, then, between you and fugitive law men, is, as to the most approved manner of committing the murder!

But to present this matter in a less objectional form. There is a robbery to be committed—a human being is to be robbed of his humanity—Samuel Lewis and yourself are for doing it in one way and Fillmore and Webster in another. Now, it seems to me, one not implicated in the transaction, would feel dishonored by aiding either in this controversy. For my own part, I wish to steer clear of it. I am very sure that upon such an issue, honest men will never become earnest on either side. There are difficulties here, which even the virtues of the Free Democracy were not able to overcome. And how any one occupying your position, can stand up before the faces of honest men, and declaim against the corruptions of old organizations for upholding the fugitive law, and not have his eloquence roll back upon his own soul, to deepen and strengthen his own sense of degradation and guilt, is more than I can comprehend. I admit you have made an honest effort to escape from legalized slavery. But the national taint of slavery was upon you as upon the other parties. You counted without your host. You over estimated the strength and purity of your purposes and have failed. And why is not your party doomed to be engulfed in that vortex of pollution which you say has overwhelmed your unfortunate and despised predecessors?

Now, sir, I have made up my mind that if I am so fettered by the constitution of the country, that I cannot, as a politician, be true to principle, I will, at least, in all matters pertaining to slavery, endeavor to make myself useful in practice, and will so vote, in spite of the restraints of party, as to teach the politicians of these free states, that he who does most to strengthen and perpetuate slavery, does most to weaken and destroy himself.

I understand the Pittsburgh Convention to acknowledge the

constitutional obligation of the free states to return fugitive slaves.

Your 10th resolution reads as follows:

"No permanent settlement of the slave question can be looked for except in the practical recognition of the truth, that slavery is sectional, and freedom national, by the total separation of the general government from slavery, and the exercise of its legitimate and constitutional influence on the side of freedom, and by leaving to the states the whole subject of slavery, and the EXTRADITION OF FUGITIVES FROM SERVICE."

This resolution recognizes the doctrine of the return or surrendering of fugitive slaves, and differing from the southern doctrine only in this: that the obligation to legislate, to make efficient the clause of the constitution, is by you thrown upon the states, instead of resting with the general government, as contended for by them. Now, if this obligation be upon the states, the duty to legislate follows. Unless, in this resolution, your Convention has paltered in a double sense—unless they have intended to play the low party trick of obscuring their views on this vitally important point, in order to strengthen their party organization—unless this be true, then, have I rightly conceived the meaning of this resolution, and your Convention stands committed, to the return of fugitive slaves.

It is in vain to say you will not support the constitution; to say nothing of the bad faith of such a course; it results from the necessity of things, that each man in every political party swears to support the constitution of the United States. He votes for you for Congress, and in so doing, requires you, on taking your seat, to dedicate yourself anew by an oath, to support this instrument, and what he does through you, in this respect, he does by himself.

It is true *your* fugitive law, when framed, may be less offensive to the constitution than the law of 1850; it may conform more to our notions of the common law administration of justice; it may be less dangerous to the rights of free men; less insolvent in its commands on us to maintain and support it, and may threaten us with fewer penalties for disobeying its requirements, and for these reasons we may rightfully and consistently urge the repeal or modification of the existing law. But in none of these questions, has the poor slave, for whom you labor, the slightest interest. His enquiry is, for this heroic effort to gain my lost liberty, am I to be subjected to the cruelties of a remorseless master? Will your law drive me back to bondage, and quench forever within every hope of freedom, and you answer, Yes!

But you may insist you do not contemplate state action for the extradition of slaves—that your views are, that the constitution executes itself—that it gives the master the right to capture, upon our free soil, his slave by brute force. If this be the constitutional right of the slave claimant, this same constitution imposes upon you the obligation to respect that right.

And do you admit, then, that you will stand by, having the power to prevent it, and quietly assent to the enslavement of your fellow men?

I submit, with deference, to your clear ^{views} upon this subject, whether, by any known rule of christian morality, the man who will do this, can be regarded less culpable than him who directly legislates in aid of this system of oppression.

There is one other theory, which was kindly and humanely dreamed out, by one Mr. Spooner, to aid ^{to} escape from these difficulties. It is, that the constitution of the United States is anti-slavery. This is made out by a forced, and unnatural construction of language, from whence an argument is deduced, which arrays itself against all history and all the facts connected with this subject, and is offensive to truth and common sense. It is based upon false premises, and its deductions illogical and absurd. It is said many worthy men adopt it, and are consoled by it; but it is doubtful, after all, if it be not more corroding to conscience than the return of fugitive slaves. But neither you nor myself can find any relief in this quarter. We have examined this argument, and long since rejected it, and it would be the sublimation of all hypocrisy for either of us to *pretend* to believe it. I am glad to see that the Pittsburgh Convention did no discredit to its high character by adopting it.

Now, sir, do you wish me to rally to the support of a third organization for the repeal of the fugitive law? and if so, where is the ground that will remain firm under my feet in such a contest? Is it that on which you stand? I may insist that this law of Congress shall be repealed, and that the states shall legislate; or, I may contend that the constitution executes itself; and, in all this, I support a pro-slavery constitution, and stand pledged to the return of fugitive slaves; and the difference between my position and that of the most ultra slaveholder on this subject, is quite too narrow to predicate party action upon, nor would it justify you or myself in separating from the whig party, if, by our connexion with it, we could secure other important results to the anti-slavery cause. Candor constrains us to admit that there is progress in this party on this subject. Sixty-six members of the Convention, representing sixty-six congressional districts, refused their assent to the compromise measures, and still refuse, and, for aught I know to the contrary, are as anti-slavery as you or myself. This is an important acquisition of anti-slavery strength since the time you stood the only advocate of this cause in Congress. I cannot see that the condition of this party is so hopeless as you represent it to be, and, above all, I cannot see how its character has so changed as to now make it criminal in you or myself to act with it.

I have thus far endeavored to show that there is no valid reason against co-operating with the whig party in the coming election. I now propose to show that there is an absolute necessity for it, if we intend to secure any solid advantage in the war so long waged against the aggressions of slavery. Your candidate, Mr. Hale, thinks the democratic party should be beaten in this election; and I think so too.

He wishes (of course) others to help beat them, and I am willing myself to help, and this constitutes the only difference between us.

We cannot hide from ourselves the fact that either Gen. Scott or Gen. Pierce must be President, on the 4th of March next, and exert, for four years, that gigantic power which has been so fruitful of evil to the cause of anti-slavery in this country—and there is another fact, which no one better understands than yourself, that it is by the leverage of presidential elections and presidential power, that the slave interest operates to accomplish all of its ambitious designs. You also know how completely it has subjected the democracy to its power. You know that its serpent coil is around every bone and muscle of that party—that every aspirant for presidential honors, looks to it alone for favor, and labors to outdo his competitors in devotion to its interests; and how by this course, he induces his honest, but blinded and misguided followers at the North, to imitate his corrupt example.

You well understand the artful policy it has imposed upon the democratic party, in order to concentrate all power in its own hands: First by insisting that it is the constitutional duty of the executive to defeat the action of Congress, in any case of ordinary legislation, whenever his individual opinion shall stand in conflict with the opinions of the people—and after acquiring this augmentation of the executive power, how it has secured the executive itself, by forcing upon the party, the rule, that the minority shall control the majority in conventions for the selection of presidential candidates, giving to herself thereby the choice of the man.

We cannot blind ourselves to the fact, if we would, that this democratic party, in this free country, has become the passive instrument in the hands of this slave power; and I can see no difference between striking at the power itself, and striking at the instrument, by the use of which alone, this power can become dangerous to us.

I cannot believe the South feel an interest in retaining the Fugitive law. They understand that an issue must be made with the abolition sentiment of the North, and this presents the strongest point to rally upon, under the constitution. Their experience of this law, must have already convinced them that it will soon become a dead letter; nor can they have any real interest in the maintenance of slavery in the District of Columbia. They reason, of course, as you would reason in their situation. You would not hope to resist this growing sentiment in favor of liberty, in this age, so active in every part of the civilized world, so as to maintain this fugitive law, or retain slavery in the capitol of this Republic. But one thing you would do—you would labor to interpose some barrier to this sentiment, that it might not impress itself upon the legislation of the country in a way to interfere with slavery or its interests. Your effort would be for some political power that would afford you this protection. In my judgment, southern men reason as you would reason in their circumstances.

They understand, as you now do, that there must be interests springing from this institution of slavery, which will ever be antagonist to the interests of the free states.

Power has passed forever from the hands of the South in the House of Representatives. They have thirty votes in the Senate, Delaware included, and the free states thirty-two. Delaware must soon be ranked with the free states, thus giving the North a majority of four votes over the South. We have the territories of New Mexico, Utah, Oregon and Minnesota, and there is no constitutional objection to their admission into the Union at the next session of Congress. Should they be admitted as free states, it would make a majority of twelve in the Senate against the South, counting Delaware as a free state.

Now, to counteract this state of things, the whole strength of the slavery extensionists, it seems to me, must inevitably be exerted. Nothing is more clear to my own mind than that they will strive to secure, in their own hands, a negative power in the Senate, to protect slavery and its interests against the action of Congress, whenever it may become necessary to do so. It is not to be supposed that they will, without an effort, confide in the hands of the North, the whole legislative power of the government, to be wielded against their institutions in any contingency. And they understand, as you do, that what is to be done in this business, must be done quickly. That soon the anti-slavery sentiment of the country will so strengthen, that it will be out of their power to effect it.

Whether the South shall add these slave states and restore to herself the balance of power, is the practical anti-slavery issue of to-day; and all others are unimportant in comparison with it. The abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, may be rightfully insisted on in vindication of a great principle; but as a question of humanity, it can have no interest. Its effect, probably, would not be to liberate one human being from slavery. For the repeal of the fugitive law, I confess I feel no special interest. If we are to have a fugitive law at all, should not its features be so odious as to shock the moral sense of the country? Such a law in a country where there is even a tolerable regard for human rights, could not be enforced. May not your doctrine of extradition be altogether too comely, too respectable; may it not burnish the guilt and consecrate the crime of extradition?

If I am right as to the true issue, will not the South, under the four year's administration of Franklin Pierce, consummate their design of adding slave states to this Union? Should they fail to do this, the fault will be all their own. If it be not accomplished during his administration, we need have no fears of it hereafter. They have selected their own man for this work, and no one questions that they have made a most happy selection. The history of Mr. Pierce, so far as I know it, is made up of services in the cause of slavery. He is incorrigible in his views upon this subject. He tells us that his old opinions

remain unshaken by all the light which has been shed upon the subject in the last seventeen years. He says his opinions have undergone no change since 1835. Few other men in the free states, I think, can say this. He was the first man in Congress to gag the free men of the North, and he tells us he would do it now. By his vote in 1835, he gave to Mr. Pinckney the privilege of making a special report against the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, and against the right of petition, (himself being one of the committee,) and two weeks after, denied to John Quincy Adams the privilege of making a like report in behalf of freedom, presenting the other side of this question; and he tells us that he would *now* repeat this outrage. In 1837 he allowed Mr. Clay to be heard in the Senate against the abolition of slavery in the District, and the next day refused to hear Mr. Morris in behalf of Ohio, on the other side of this same question. He is ready to do the same thing now.

The only thing that tended in any way to relieve his character from the just indignation of every true friend of human rights, was a rumor prevalent, that he had condemned the principles of the fugitive law. But he tells us that this rumor is false; and that he has absolutely done nor said nothing concerning slavery, to relieve his manhood from hopeless and irretrievable infamy.

Now, with such a man for President, selected by the South, (a fact which he refers to as the most flattering circumstance connected with his nomination,) conscious that he owes his elevation to the slave interest, and is but the creature of their will, and with a Democratic majority in both houses of Congress, pledged to resist, even so much as a prayer in behalf of freedom, and all this strengthened and backed up by the verdict of the nation, endorsing the principles of Pierce and his party, it does appear to me insane to doubt that slavery will secure all it ever can secure under this government.

Will the election of Gen. Scott defeat this scheme for the admission of more slave states? and this brings me to the end of what I have to say on this subject.

I have no belief that Gen. Scott will represent your peculiar views or my own on this question of slavery. I expect his position to be national on this subject. I expect him to stand where the greatest of Southern Whigs—the author of the compromise—stood. Mr. Clay stated in the Senate, that he would never consent to the increase of slavery in this country. I expect him to stand where Mr. Benton stands. That Gen. Scott will ever occupy a position more favorable to slavery than either of these men, no man with any knowledge of his history, can believe.

Whether Gen. Scott endorsed the Whig resolutions or not—whether he has assented to the fugitive law or not, or to that part of the compromise which admits Utah and New Mexico into the Union with or without slavery, as the inhabitants of those states shall determine, can

be of no importance for us to know in this crisis. It is too low ground upon which to rest the decision of the question made between you and myself; and I will simply state, on this point, that his position has been misrepresented. No feature of the Whig creed is better defined than that in relation to the exercise of the veto power. Whenever, in the judgment of the executive, legislation is in violation of the constitution, and where it is hasty and inconsiderate, the President may interpose his veto. The constitutional objection cannot arise on the repeal of a law, nor will your action for the repeal of the fugitive law, be, in all probability, very hasty. This is not a question of expediency settled by the Whig party, but a question of constitutional power. This policy declares that the executive has *no power*, under the constitution, to interpose his veto, except in the cases referred to. This doctrine Gen. Scott endorses and stands pledged to the whole nation to maintain. North and South understand his position alike. When he takes his oath of office, he swears not to interfere with the action of the people for the repeal of this law.

Now, if the intention be, not to rest the decision of this momentous question upon technicalities alone, if a practical view is to be taken of this eminently practical question, then Gen. Scott's position, even as you understand it, is not an objection to your supporting him.

But here is the decision, it seems to me, we are called on to make, and by this decision we should be governed. Is the position of the respective candidates so defined that the election of either will amount to an expression of the people for or against the admission of more slave states into the Union? I hold, beyond doubt, that it is. That the election of Pierce will be a triumph of the South, and the election of Scott, a Northern triumph. I have already shown that the position of Pierce is southern and slave-holding—that he is the favorite and selected candidate of the most inveterate and uncompromising slavery propagandist in this nation, and if by his election, the nation shall endorse his position, no power you can interpose, will prevent slavery from acquiring all it can hope to acquire under the present government. Why should they wait? Will there ever be a time more favorable for doing what they have to do, than under his administration; and is not every moment's delay full of danger to them?

On the other hand, what is the position of Gen. Scott? It is a conservative, national position—a position adverse to the schemes of the ultra slave holders of the South, and no one can deny it, if they will consult the facts. His whole life testifies his hostility to slavery. With his high position and available character as a candidate for the presidency, you have seen his party South, for years, resisting his nomination. You have seen their sympathisers at the North doing the same thing, and when nominated, the most prominent and influential men at the South abandoning him and going over and cheerfully supporting Pierce; and you see these Northern sympathisers here, still

refusing to sustain him. And as I have already said, and as you well know, those who brought forward and sustained Gen. Scott in the Convention, are men thoroughly opposed to the extension of slavery; and if elected, can we reasonably doubt that his election will be taken as an expression of the people against the admission of any more slave states into this Union? and that this expression, no Northern politician of either party will dare to trifle with.

My hope for our cause is not so much in what the Whig party will do, as in what the Democratic party will be deterred from doing; for the power in both branches of Congress will be in their hands. All we can interpose to prevent the anticipated mischief, is the election of Gen. Scott, and it will be sufficient for this purpose. You nor myself are not left to conjecture on this subject. Before Mr. Polk's election, there was scarcely a Northern Democrat to be found, bold enough to take strong ground for annexation; and after his election, scarcely any to be found who would take ground against it.

These Northern men do not favor slavery because they love darkness rather than light; but as a means to gratify their ambition for place and power. Teach them that the people are against them, and they have no further motive for betraying the North. You may talk of the moral influence of your vote for Mr. Hale, upon them. This is not what they heed. It is efficient voting that they care for—voting that will thrust them from office and its emoluments.

You may tell me that both parties stand committed to the admission of New Mexico and Utah into the Union with or without slavery, as the people of those states shall decide. Let it be conceded. And I hold that the people of these territories may be safely trusted with the decision of this question, uninfluenced by government officials. But let the doctrine that slave holders have now, the right to remove to these territories with their slaves, (the doctrine of the South) be recognized by the executive—let him select for Governors, Judges and other officers for these territories, men of these views, and who can doubt that these territories will decide for slavery. And do you question that Gen. Pierce will select such men? Do you believe that Gen. Scott will do it?

There can be no doubt that Oregon and Minnesota will come into the Union as free states, and even with New Mexico and Utah admitted as slave states, the free states will have four majority over the South in the Senate. This will not do! She must have a division of California or Texas, or the annexation of Cuba, or all these—nothing short of these will answer her wants. You surely cannot doubt that all this would be defeated under the administration of Gen. Scott.

Now, Sir, we have labored long in this anti-slavery cause, and good results have followed. Much has been done to rectify a false public sentiment in the country, and we are approaching the crisis on this subject. And are you not, by yielding to a false and pernicious senti-

ment of allegiance to party organization, about to throw away all you have gained? With all candor and respect, I say to you, this is my belief.

Should Pierce be elected, my opinion is, it will be the end of political anti-slavery. I do not believe you can get up sufficient interest, after the question of the annexation of slave states shall be put to rest, to keep alive your organization. As machinery for working moral convictions, it is, most clearly, the poorest ever invented. As it increases in strength it increases in corruption. I see no object of any great practical importance which you can labor for. Men will not labor for political abstractions—their affections will be engrossed by their own private affairs as usual. We have so many active business interests, that questions must arise in all the states bearing upon these interests, upon which the people will take issue at the ballot boxes, and concerning which new political combinations will be made. And my humble belief is, that if Pierce is elected, you bring the Free Soil movement to an inglorious end.

These are my reasons for sustaining Gen. Scott; I submit them with diffidence; not that I doubt their correctness, but because they stand opposed to the views of those who are distinguished by their position, by their philanthropy, their eloquence, and all those other qualities which give to their opinions, the force of authority. I know, however, that this subject of human wrongs, is all powerful in its appeals to our sympathies; that it stirs to their profoundest depths, the strongest passions of the human heart, and that you are now laboring under this strong excitement, a condition not the most favorable for right results upon this subject; nor can I forget that others equally distinguished, under similar feeling, and from motives equally pure, have committed errors the most extravagant to be found in the annals of mankind.

DANIEL R. TILDEN.